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## EXTRACTS FROM THE DIARY OF EDMUND RUFFIN.

(See QUARTERLY, XIV., 193-211, 215; XX., 69-101; XXI., 224-233; XXII., 258-263; XXIII., 153-172.)

## THE GREAT STORM OF 1857.

Jan. 18, 1857.

Sunday. Snow with strong wind & bitter cold. Violent & continued north wind, forming the snow in deep drifts. We could scarcely keep comfortably warm sitting by the fire. Temp.  $7^{\circ}$  at 9 A. M. and  $3^{\circ}$  at 4 P. M.

Jan. 19<sup>th</sup>.

The furious north wind but little abated. Snowing ceased in the night. The ways impassable, by snow drifts, & other places barely covered. The thermometer blown down & broken, so cannot know the temperature this morning. I passed a wretched night, with cold feet. Yet I went to bed comfortable, with a good fire burning until it burnt out—& with as much covering as could do any good—6 blankets, & 2 more over my feet, which were pulled up when needed, & also a doubled cloak over all, on my knees & feet. Woolen night socks, & over them a woolen wrapper, both well warmed, covered my feet, & yet before the fire had quite burnt out, I was awakened by cold feet, they continued to grow colder until I had fire & arose in the morning. No amount of covering & nothing but external heat can keep me warm in the coldest nights. The snow lies so irregularly owing to the violent wind, that I cannot even guess the depth. Perhaps it may not average 10 inches. But while many places are scarcely covered, in others the drifts are from 3 to 7 feet deep. It is not only extremely laborious to walk, or even to ride in any direction, or pathway, but even dangerous, because of the snow drifts to be crossed. No work attempted today, by Edmund's order, except to feed the live-stock, & to put wood on the fires. Luckily a good stack of wood was on hand, & cut up,

before the snow began. We hear that in the overseer's house, & all the negroes' houses, (the latter good framed and new buildings) the entrance of the very fine snow, driven by the wind through scattered crannies, covered all the floors & even the beds. Such a snow storm I have never known before. Clear, & something milder. We needed the mail especially, but did not attempt to send to the Post Office, because of the difficulty & danger, & also under the belief that no mail could have been brought.

20<sup>th</sup>.

By using still greater precautions, & especially by keeping the fire burning in my room all night, & a servant sleeping there for the purpose, (neither of which did I ever have before,) I kept nearly warm and comfortable. But not entirely so—as at 1 o'clock I felt my feet a little cold. Clear & milder. My sons Edmund & Charles attempted to ride, & with great difficulty, reached the parsonage, on the public road, & but a mile from the farm buildings. The way was barely practicable, the riders having to dismount in several of the deepest snow drifts, to enable their horses to scramble out. For even an empty wheel carriage of any kind, the way was impracticable. Edmund & Mary rode on horseback to Tarbay, for exercise for the latter. And though the short distance is over level & open ground, where there was nothing to accumulate drifts, the passage was difficult for horses, & the small drifts would have stopped walkers. Everything that has to be moved on this farm, except in the yard, has to be carried on horseback. The only firm walking is on the frozen river, over which the ice & snow extend every where. I walked out more than a quarter mile, & I believe that the ice is strong enough to allow walking across. Except the calls made today on the nearest neighbors, at Tarbay & the Parsonage, I suppose that every family has been entirely cut off from all intercourse with others.

21<sup>st</sup>.

Warmer. Edmund & Charles rode to the Glebe, but Charles had to leave his horse there, & pick his way on foot, through the fields, to his farm. The public mail road beyond the Glebe was

impassable, & had not then been trodden by a foot. A physician attempted to ride farther, but was obliged to turn back, though in sight of his patient's house. Edmund heard the average depth of the snow estimated at 18 inches. He thinks it not much less. Having been confined to the house & yard, & seeing so much ground nearly bare & here the wind was most violent, I had supposed the average depth of the snow much less—perhaps 10 inches deep. But it is not the general depth, but the particular deep drifts, that render walking & riding almost impracticable. I walked to Tarbay, by favor of the frozen snow along the river-shore, & the adjacent hillsides, on which the north wind did not allow much snow to remain. Of course, no mail has reached the Post Office since the snow began last Saturday night. Such obstruction to travelling, even for a day, I have never heard of before, in this region. According to present appearances & prospects, the roads will scarcely be practicable for carriages in a week. No one has attempted even to ride on horseback, except on compulsion. Those who have been compelled to send to the mill, for meal, have sent on horseback, & some on foot—and these have left the road often to avoid the snow drifts, that the travel does not in the least prepare for the subsequent use of wheel carriages.

Jan. 22.

Colder last night, & a light snow. Clear & bright sunshine, but with a N. W. sharp wind & the weather colder (apparently) than at any time before. Confined to the house by the cold wind, & very tired of the confinement. Nothing heard from the outside of the farm. I have read everything I can find amusing in our late Reviews & other periodicals, & have been reduced to such poor stuff as the books of "Fanny Fern."

23<sup>rd</sup>.

I walked across the river on the ice, to Berkeley landing, from the beach nearest to this house. With the usual liberal measure allowed for distances on water, this broad part of the river is generally called 3 miles across. But it is certainly less, & from the time I made, I do not think the distance more than 2 miles. I

walked over in 55 minutes, & returned in 60. I designed to have visited the family for an hour or two. But hearing, at the shore, that all were from home, I returned immediately, after leaving my card. The ice was generally rough, but some spots (newly formed since the cessation of the violent wind in the night of July 18<sup>th</sup>.) being smooth. Some patches of dry & thin snow. The ice had numerous cracks, made by the rising & falling of the tide, & the sound of cracking was heard uninterruptedly. In one place, the ice settled perceptibly, with cracking, as I was on it. But it was so thick, that my weight did not make the least addition to the settling or cracking. No doubt the passage was very safe. But we are so unaccustomed here to ice so solid, & still more to any one venturing to cross a wide & deep river, that my walking over was a very unusual performance. Except in the case of the sailors of a vessel frozen in, & who walked to the shores to obtain food &c, I did not hear of any walking across the river last winter, when it was hard frozen—nor in the many preceding milder winters, during my proprietorship & residence here. But though very few persons would now dare to walk across—& still fewer except under strong necessity—& through certainly none ought to incur any apparent risk, without necessity—I am inclined to believe that a horse might have been supported on most of the ice over which I passed today, notwithstanding its numerous cracks. I was well wrapped up to guard me from cold, & my feet especially well covered. I found the clothing & the exercise sufficient to keep me warm enough. I am not very much fatigued by the walk of at least 4 miles on the ice, but I had several falls, & by two of which I was hurt considerably for a while. I carried a light but strong staff of 7 feet long, with a headless nail driven partly into the lower end, to prevent my slipping, & also to offer some aid in case of the ice breaking. However, I had every little dread of the latter contingency—& if it had happened, I would not have been in much danger of drowning, but in great danger of perishing by freezing, if remaining wet for half an hour in the present temperature. The ice on all the shallow water, & in the bay on this side, was as described above. But that over the ship channel looked less trust-

worthy. From the greater effect there of both the wind & tides, all the ice had been broken up, & mostly in small pieces, during the snow storm—& all this ice has been formed since the night of 18<sup>th</sup>. This ice is full of the fragments of the previous cover of ice, very distinct from the new portion in which they are imbedded. But both the old & the new there is perfectly transparent. Sent to the Post Office, only to hear that no mail had yet arrived—& that no wheel-carriage, or sleigh, had been on the main public & mail road. We have so little snow, that few persons, in the country, or for business, ever use a sleigh. But on this snow, because of its scarcity or absence in many spots, & the deep drifts in others, sleighing would be impracticable. We have now lost all three mails for the week—& have no prospect that the next mail can come. Yet this post office is but 16 miles from Petersburg & the main rail-road route, which must have been cleared of snow some days ago.

24<sup>th</sup>

Rode to the Glebe, & thence to Ruthven to dinner. The road so deep in snow in many places that I had to leave it (following preceding tracks,) crossing fences into the adjacent fields. Found, as expected, that Julian's thermometer also had been broken by the storm. Mildred has been detained much over her designed stay at Ruthven—but she & the other ladies there having had a pleasant time, while confined to the house.

25<sup>th</sup>

Sunday. No attempt to get to church—as it would certainly have been fruitless. Milder.

26.

Still no mail. Only one cart had passed along the main mail road, & that had been compelled to return, because unable to proceed.

27.

Very mild. Thawing—& no freezing by bed-time. Left Ruthven for Beechwood. A sale appointed for today had served to draw out sundry neighbors, to see other persons, & hear some

news. I found some of these on my route, & heard something from abroad. Mr. Mark's thermometer showed  $12^{\circ}$  below zero, on the morning of the 23<sup>rd</sup>. This was  $2^{\circ}$  colder than I ever knew before. Mr. Dunn had been compelled to ride to Petersburg on that day. Heard that the rail-way to Washington had not been then made practicable & of course no northern mail, except from Richmond. 4 men in Petersburg & in the vicinity had been exposed to the weather of the night of the 18<sup>th</sup> & 3 were frozen to death, & the fourth is expected to die. One of these was Dr. Cox, a physician, riding in a buggy from Petersburg to his farm in Chesterfield. He was unable to open the gate, or to reach the house on foot, & died close to it. His companion (Traylor) is alive, but is worse than dead. All these cases were probably the results of more or less of intemperance. But two negro men, supposed sober, were frozen to death, in different places of this county, in that dreadful Sunday night in attempting to visit other houses but a few hundred yards distant. The snow & snow ice over the hard ice on the river mostly thawed, & in soft wet sludge, or water, before night. Edmund still confined to the house by his cold.

28<sup>th</sup>.

Thawing last night & all this day. Light drizzle. Julian hearing yesterday that the mail had been brought as far as the Court House, sent there for his papers, & sent them to us this morning. We thus received the paper for 9 days at once—& scarcely any news, except the numerous accounts of the incidents of the snow storm, & of disasters therefrom. The roads are still blocked up & impassable everywhere heard from. The railways had been impassable for from 2 to 4 days—& no entire opening northward yet. Sunday more deaths reported, and others barely escaped, from freezing. The temperature correctly observed in Petersburg, on the morning of the 23<sup>rd</sup>, reported to be  $14^{\circ}$  below zero—& in Richmond  $13^{\circ}$ —& in different others places of the vicinity, still lower marks, & in one case as low as  $20^{\circ}$  below zero. I doubt these latter statements, but fully believe in the report from Petersburg. One of the negroes reported yesterday as frozen in Prince George, was in Hanover. And 4 whites, (one a small

boy) in a wagon, were frozen to death in that county. In Richmond & Petersburg, (the only towns from which we received papers,) there has been a general cessation of ordinary labor & business. No supplies or customers from the country. The passenger & mail trains on the Central Railroad, (on which the great N. & S. mail is transported,) remained, with all its freight, blocked up within 6 miles of Richmond, for two days & nights, & could not be there reached, & the passengers relieved, by carriages, nor even by messengers on foot, sent with food. The mail to this office has not been brought yet — nor even attempted to be brought by the only means, that is, on horseback, & frequently through the fields, where the snow is too deep in the roads. It is not so strange that so many lives have been lost, as that there were so few. The great violence of the wind & intense cold & the continued driving snow on the night of Sunday (18<sup>th</sup>) prevented the slaves visiting as is their usage. If the storm had not abated, many more of sober negroes, as well as of drunken whites would have perished. The danger of the former was so great on this farm, that it was a mercy that all escaped. The negroes' houses were built in several different places, the better for health & comfort. If any one of the residents of one house had visited another, in that night, he might have sunk in a snow drift, where no cry for help could have been heard, though within a few hundred yards of a dwelling.

Jan. 29<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Sayre arrived, to the great joy of his wife, & of all of us for her sake especially. With her feeble state of health, & weak nerves, she had been as wretched because of Mr. Sayre's absence, & not hearing from him, as if he had been exposed to all the horrors of the storm & cold. As might have been counted on with confidence, he has been quite safe & comfortable, & only shut in by the snow, & came as soon as a way was practicable. As it was, his carriage (hired in Petersburg at double price,) was the first that came near so far. For the last 7 miles the road was abandoned almost entirely, & the carriage was driven through the fields, & sometimes through woods. The railroads from Richmond to Washington were only opened on yesterday. Got a late

newspaper by Mr. S., but with no important & definite news. Glad to learn there that had been no disaster, & no suffering, from the storm, at Malbourne. The public roads there were at last made passable by the road laborers, called out by the surveyors of the roads. Here, no surveyor has moved, & perhaps has not thought of it—because working on the roads to remove or tread down snow was never heard of, or needed, heretofore. Unless it is done, no public road can be travelled by carriages for a week or more, & neither the church or the post-office will be accessible along the roads by carriages.

Feby. 2<sup>nd</sup>.

It would seem from the annexed statement of a Petersburg paper, (*if to be relied on,*) that the degrees of cold were very different, at different hours of the same morning—& this may serve to account for the various statements of different observers of thermometers, on the morning of the cold 18<sup>th</sup>. It is reported in the Norfolk paper that a man walked across Hampton Roads, from Old Point Comfort to Willoughby's Point, & thence, on the ice, to Norfolk. Though the ferry steamers were kept running, (by breaking the ice ahead) still most of the persons who passed between Norfolk & Portsmouth walked across on the ice. Persons also walked across the Chesapeake bay, at Annapolis, where it is 12 miles wide—& from Edenton to Plymouth, 20 miles, across Albemarle Sound.

[ANNEXED CLIPPING FROM A PETERSBURG NEWSPAPER.]

THE COLD ON FRIDAY.

"We are indebted to a friend who resides on Bollingbrook street, for the following report of the state of the Thermometer on Friday at the hours indicated, by observations carefully made by himself:—

|                     |                 |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| At 5½ o'clock A. M. | 15° below zero. |
| " 7 " "             | 17½° " "        |
| " 7½ " "            | 22° " "         |
| " 8 " "             | 20° " "         |
| " 8½ " "            | 16° " "         |
| " 9½ " "            | 13° " "         |

At the last named hour the Thermometer was put in the sun and showed 5° below zero. These observations were taken on Bollingbrook street in a Northern exposure. In the more elevated parts of the city it was about 2° warmer.

The above statement fully establishes the fact that the cold exceeded in intensity any, within the memory of the present generation—and it may, we doubt not, be truly asserted that it never has been equalled in this part of the world. So Friday, January 23, 1857, will be memorable, (we hope in all time to come) as the very coldest day upon record."

WILLIAM MAXWELL AND ANDREW STEVENSON.

Jan. 30<sup>th</sup>.

The later papers state the deaths of two Virginians of some note, William Maxwell & Andrew Stevenson, but whose claims for distinction were very different. Mr. Maxwell had great natural powers of mind, well cultivated by education, fine literary taste, was a good writer & eminent as a conversational debater. Besides his general literary pursuits, through his long life, he had occupied (for the first year,) the post of editor of the Journal of Commerce in N. Y., & later the Presidency of Hampden Sidney College. His only service in political life was for one term in the State Senate of Va. in which, as elsewhere, his ready & pleasing elocution placed him in high rank. Still, with all his admitted abilities, and with unquestioned private integrity & worth, & a moral & religious life from his boyhood, he never succeeded in any effort, except in gaining the esteem of his friends; & his living has had as little effect on the public interest or action as in promoting his own private interests or objects. He was not wanting in industrious & proper effort, & yet lived & died poor. Stevenson was immeasurably inferior in natural faculties of the higher order, & still more so in scholastic education. He was not a pattern of integrity in private life—and in public, was a corrupt & unprincipled politician, seeking to advance his own interest in preference to all others. But his moderate abilities included preserverance & impudence, & were precisely suited to benefit himself. He succeeded in reaching eminence & wealth, as a lawyer—and high rank as a politician, in his long public life. He

occupied a high position in the legislature of V<sup>a</sup>.—then in Congress, where he was Speaker, until (& indeed after,) he had received as pay for his corrupt devotion to Gen. Jackson's administration, the bribe of the appointment of minister to Great Britain. This great honor, (if it had been honorably earned and deserved,) seemed however to have been deemed payment in full for all his political services—as he never could afterwards obtain anything more of political office from either government or people. Still, he had empty compliments, flattering to his vanity. Thus, he was appointed a Visitor of the University, & Rector, or chairman of the board. He was little fitted by education for the government of an institution of learning. He had not even learned latin, though he was in the habit & very fond of using commonplace latin quotations in his speeches in Congress &c., which he obtained readily, with their meaning, from the "Dictionary of Quotations." I have had so bad an opinion of this distinguished Virginian, that I have avoided making his personal acquaintance—& (though I trust for different cause,) he seemed as little to desire my acquaintance, or to appreciate any worth in me. One reason may have been this: Among his undeserved honors, he used to be invited to deliver agricultural addresses (in other States,) & was president of the former State Agrl. Society of V<sup>a</sup>. (so-called,) until that abortion was merged in the present State Society, & when I was unanimously elected President, & not a vote was given to him, for that office.

#### A VISIT TO WASHINGTON.

Feby. 13.

Went to Washington, by the Fredericksburg line—railroad & steamer. The Potomac much obstructed by ice still—both new, of  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch thick, & in the upper part of the route, the old & very thick ice, broken up, but lying thick. This came from above the falls. But the steamer is well constructed for breaking ice—& as the passage had been broken through, & travelled twice a day, we made better way than expected. To Browne's Hotel. Found there M<sup>r</sup>. W<sup>m</sup>. Boulware, & Thos. Ruffin, (M. C.) of N. C<sup>a</sup>.

Feb. 14.

In the course of the day, saw most of my former acquaintances, (members of Congress,) & was introduced to others—& saw some other & distinguished of great men, whom, humble as I may be, I would not be introduced to, or hold any communication with. Among these is Sam Houston, the "hero of San Jacinto," the former President of Texas, & now senator of Texas. The position of this man, in regard to his merits, is marvellous. When long ago in Congress, he was only notable for his want of integrity, his being a tool & a pet of President Jackson, & his conduct as a bully & a western rowdy. Afterwards, when Governor of Tennessee, his conduct to his newly married wife was so monstrous & unaccountable, that he was obliged (by public indignation) to resign his office, & leave the State. Subsequently *that* wife obtained a divorce. He took refuge among the Indians, & became as one of them, & took an Indian wife, whom he basely abandoned when he found it convenient to return to more civilized associates. Next he turned up in Texas, & in that new community of desperadoes of the worst habits & morals in general, it may be that Houston's vices were recommendations. He rose to the command of the army, & led in its seemingly hopeless retreat before the Mexican army, & in all the signal victory afterwards achieved at San Jacinto. Yet many of the most respectable of the men who fought there, pronounced that Houston showed total incompetency, & even want of personal courage—that his men forced him to stand at bay, or rather that the army fought without his will, or his direction—& the victory was gained without any aid from the nominal commander. Still the glory so acquired raised him to be President of independent Texas. During all this time, in conduct & habits, he was a low blackguard & common drunkard. After the annexation of Texas, (which he tried all he could do to prevent,) he was elected one of the U. S. senators of the new State. He has since aspired to the presidency of the U. S., & has abstained latterly from his former drunken & other low habits. In the hope of obtaining northern support for his ambitious views, he has assumed northern grounds as to slavery. But in this last corrupt movement he has over-

reached himself. It is understood that he will not be again elected to his present post—& he will have lost his previous popular support, & become as despicable as he deserves to be, without gaining anything from the north. He has married again, & thus has or had three wives alive at once— his divorced wife, his deserted Indian wife, the last & legal wife. It is one of the foulest disgraces of this country, that this despicable wretch should have reached, & so long maintained, a high position in popular favor, & that he should have been even thought of as one who might be elected President of the United States. For though other as base men have stood as high, most of these (as Benton) had great ability as well as villainy. But Houston never has exhibited any evidence of uncommon talent & his deviations from the course of discretion & good sense, as well as of moral rules, have been accounted for by some persons as the results of supposed partial insanity.

I sought & had introductions to Elwood Fisher & A. Dudley Mann. The latter is full of confidence in the success of his scheme of a line of enormous steamers like the "Great Eastern" now building near London. These vessels will be 700 feet in length, or 30,000 or more tons freight, are expected to cross the Atlantic in 7 days, & can so economize fuel, & cheapen freights, as to command the monopoly of transportation. And these vessels will draw so much water, that the Chesapeake Bay & Norfolk harbor only will afford admittance. If half of Mr Mann's anticipations can be realized, they promise a great improvement & a glorious future for southern & especially Virginia commerce. I called on him, & was much gratified to hear his views more fully detailed than in his publication on the subject. I had long known, by his writings, Elwood Fisher as the able & instructive advocate for the southern states & their institution of slavery, & was rejoiced to make his personal acquaintance, & to converse freely with him.

15<sup>th</sup>.

Was introduced to Major Ben. Macculloch, the celebrated Texan soldier, & who, as commander of the company of "Texas Rangers," rendered distinguished services in the Mexican war, &

especially at Buena Vista. There, as I have heard, his previous bold & successful reconnoitring of the enemy's forces, penetrating within their piquet guards, was very instrumental in securing our great & wonderful victory. His appearance & manner are entirely different from what I would have expected in one of his deeds & associations. His face is handsome & striking, & his countenance mild & pleasing—his dress & manners such as suit a plain & unpretending but high-bred gentleman. I was much pleased with him in our short conversation. Boulware & Fisher came to my apartment, & we conversed for two hours—F. the main talker. I referred, with due & high commendation to his celebrated lecture on the "North & South," & our conversation was on its subject, & that of my own former address or the social results of slavery & of its absence. F. adduced many facts, within his own experience, to sustain my positions which, however correct, were more drawn by me from reason & induction, than from any personal knowledge, or experience. Fisher's conversation is lively, amusing & instructive. He was raised a Quaker—& his grandfather & father had emancipated their slaves & made every other incidental sacrifice to perform what they deemed their moral & religious duty in that respect.

16<sup>th</sup>.

Soon after breakfast Senator Hunter called to see me. I did not recollect him, until he announced his name. When I had before called to see my old friend Goode, where Hunter lives also, I asked for the latter, but he was out—& I left no card, or message for him, so as not to make any claim on his attention. Long ago, when he had attained no higher place than a seat in the House of Representatives, there was personal acquaintance & some correspondence between us. I have in almost everything approved his political conduct, & wished for his success & higher elevation. But it is now 20 years since I had met with him, & nearly as long since any letters had been exchanged. His visit was an unusually early hour, & otherwise without ceremony, & his manner cordial, kind, & as plain, as might be expected in country life. He offered to take me into the Senate Chamber, & some other attentions, which I knew would have been a tax on his

much occupied time. I gladly, & only, accepted his invitation to the Senate Chamber, at the proper hour. Since Hunter has been deemed a prominent aspirant to the presidency, & with much prospect of future success, he is said to have become in his manner reserved, cold, & very cautious of his words. I saw that he was (& properly in his position,) cautious in his words, & very different from my own open & unweighed expressions on political matters—but nothing of coldness, or reserve otherwise, & no assumption of dignity, more than when we had met formerly. At the Senate Chamber, afterwards, & at my request, M<sup>r</sup> Hunter introduced me to Senator Toombs of G<sup>a</sup>. I referred to his published letter to the late “Southern Convention,” in which he assumed the position that the legislatures of the Southern States, had the legal & constitutional right to tax the commodities of the North, after their introduction—& which power, if exercised, may be used effectually to defend & aid the southern states, & to retaliate the injuries of the north. I told him that if he was sure of being correct in his views, he owed to our cause, & also to himself, to sustain his propositions, in detail, & to have their truth established. He answered that he was perfectly sure of the soundness of his positions, & that he had been collecting materials, & considering all the many published objections to his letters, & would, as soon as at leisure, present the subject, fully elucidated, to the public. I earnestly hope that he may be able to do so—& that the Southern States may fully avail themselves of this potent means for defence, & retaliation. But I doubt it. I have no legal knowledge on this or other subjects, & cannot present legal objections. But it seems to me that if the several states fully possess the power of taxing, (& of course prohibiting,) the sale of the commodities of other states, that it may be so exercised as to obstruct entirely the free commerce designed by the federal constitution, & to break the union itself. And though these results are exactly such as I would value the power for, I cannot believe that any such destructive power was ever designed to be admitted into the constitution.

With M<sup>r</sup>. Boulware rode to the Observatory to visit Lieut. Maury. I had known him before, & found him now, as formerly,

cordial, affable & agreeable, in our conversations on ordinary topics, in addition to his far more exalted merits as a man of science. He is one of the most able men of this confederation—& perhaps has the most extended reputation in Europe of any living citizen of America. Afternoon, visited the great niece of my wife, formerly Marian Moore, now married to Lieut. Johnson, U. S. N.

Feby. 17<sup>th</sup>.

Attending to the two houses of congress. Went to dine, on invitation of Mr Hunter, with his "mess," which consists of himself, Senator Mason of Va., Senator Butler of S. Ca., & Messrs. Goode & Garnett, members of H. of R. from Va. I had previously been well acquainted with all, except Senator Mason. Mr. Boulware the only other guest. We had a very pleasant sitting, of several hours. There was nothing said seriously on political matters—but enough in other ways to make me think that Buchanan, the incoming president, has very little of the respect or the confidence of the men from the south, by whose support alone he was sustained & elected. I anticipate for him a reign that will bring to him but little of either pleasure or honor. The victory in the election of president, such as it was, was gained by the southern states & the Democratic party, as I inferred, only because Buchanan was a Pennsylvanian, & had the votes of his state because of favor, & not because of their approval. But I had heard from Fisher, & it was repeated to-day, that enormous sums of money were sent from the city of New York, & a good deal also from the democrats of New England, to buy votes in Pennsylvania—and which turned the vote of that state. The victory over Fremont & abolitionism, if thus gained by bribery, is worth even less than I had before estimated it.

18<sup>th</sup>.

As proposed yesterday by Mr. Hunter, he called for me this morning soon after breakfast, & carried me to the public Botanic Garden, which is rather a collection of exotic & mostly tropical plants, in several green or hot-houses. The establishment is

under the charge of a very intelligent & competent Scotchman, named Smith, who was at first employed as a common laborer. There were many curious plants, which would have interested me for hours. But I would not detain Mr. Hunter long, as I knew his time was precious. His polite offer & invitation, as on the two proceeding days, admitted me to the Senate Chamber. Nothing of interest there, as in the House of Representatives. Saw De Bow, editor of the Southern Review, & had some conversations in regard to it & connected matters.

Feb. 19.

An exciting scene in the House of Representatives, for which I had been watching two days previous. The report of the "corruption committee" was submitted. Four members, all abolitionists & northern men (3 of N. Y. & 1 of Conn.,) are proved guilty of receiving enormous bribes, for their votes to enrich private interests, & their expulsion from the house is recommended by the committee, by 4 to 1. The committee, selected by the abolition speaker, consists of two democrats, two abolitionists, & one "know-nothing" whig. The reading, & then the reception of the report was opposed by every effort, by some of the abolitionists, in long speeches. But two others of that party denounced this attempt to produce delay, & thus ward off the trial—by which delay alone the rascals would escape punishment, as the session is so near at an end. After a long & animated, & disorderly debate, the report was received, & ordered, with the testimony, to be printed. The discussion is postponed to next week. We have enough of immoral men in the south, & enough of such representatives in Congress. Nevertheless, not a member from any slave-holding state has been suspected of sharing in this base conduct, of receiving bribes, which though only now proved, has existed for a long time. So it had come to be understood that very few large private claims could be passed without bribery—& that few such were rejected, if enough money was used to forward them. Still, this was but suspicion, & the facts were known only to those who either paid or received the bribes. Very warm for the last three days—no fires needed—& chilly as I am, a single sheet was as much bed-covering as I could bear in the early part of the nights.

Who were to compose the cabinet of the new president has been a mystery until yesterday, when it was announced (though on no certain authority,) & the members are now believed to be understood. Cass is to be the Secretary of State. Howell Cobb of G<sup>a</sup>. Sec. of War, & Floyd, of Va. Sec. of the Navy. All these I deem bad appointments, & there is nothing to compensate these deficiencies in the other heads of inferior departments. In addition to objections to Cass's political views, (he being a representative of northern democracy,) he has seemed to have a monomania for war with England. Besides, he is old, that his mind is probably failing, & it was never of very high order. Cobb was an advocate for the "compromise" measures of 1850, by which the rights of the southern states were sacrificed. In Ex-Gov. Floyd's integrity, public or private, I have no confidence. Pickens of S. C. is the only member of the new cabinet who (I suppose) goes fully for the south. But his own state could supply many men as true as he can be, & of greater ability. Yet all the democratic newspapers are pronouncing the appointments to be admirable.

20<sup>th</sup>.

Called on Mr Wheeler our minister to Nicaragua, with whom I had been slightly acquainted formerly. Had much information from him concerning that country & its inhabitants. He thinks that, according to his latest news, Walker's situation is good. He has nearly 1200 men from the U. S., which number Wheeler thinks can maintain their ground against all the forces that the allies of Central America can bring against them. Nearly the whole population is of mixed blood, & no distinction made between, or repugnance of any one color to another. The only inhabitants of pure blood are the aborigines. These are also the best of the population, in morals & habits—but they are few in number. Taken altogether, & throughout Central America, the people are worthless, & afford no hope of their improvement. They must give way to the Anglo-Saxon race—and their extinction will be a benefit to America. \* \* \*

With Mr. Boulware, invited to take family dinner with Mr. Fisher. Mrs. Fisher a woman of fine appearance, & very intelli-

gent & agreeable in conversation. The time spent very pleasantly. This morning completed an arrangement with De Bow. I am to furnish to him any of my writings on general agricultural subjects, which, if approving & publishing them, he will pay for at the rate of \$3. the page of his Review. I proposed for this purpose most of the several articles I have written (without correcting or altering as yet,) in the course of 1856. And this is the only proper channel for them—as they are too general, & not enough practical, & also too long, for communications to the State Agricultural Society, & unsuited to any other publication, even if the agricultural periodical papers were not all of too low character to receive my pieces. In addition, probably neither they nor the political or commercial papers would choose to publish such long & general or speculative articles, although furnished to them gratuitously. Of course, none of them (in the south) would pay anything for communications of this or any other kind. De Bow also agreed to republish my recent articles advocating a dissolution of the Union. I was surprised that he should so consent. I had placed the series in his hand for his secretary—but I believe he read but little of them, before agreeing to insert them. Spent the evening in reading & correcting & making some change of form of the pieces, suitable to its place in a Review. At De Bow's request, it is to appear with my name as the author. If there is no other reason for its attracting notice, the boldness of the propositions, in a work of such character as this Review, will both attract attention, & bring on the acknowledged author plenty of censure & abuse.

Gen. Cass has long been noted for the exhibition of hatred for England, & a seeming wish to get into war with that country. Fears seem to be entertained by many, that he may bring this about. Lord Palmerston the prime minister of England, is about as old as Cass, with a general propensity for war, & probably hates this country as much as Cass hates England. It would be remarkable, though not a very improbable event, if these two old fellows, who ought to be pushed off the stage of action, should bring about so great a calamity as a war between their countries.

21<sup>st</sup>.

Dined by invitation with A. Dudley Mann, at his boarding house. The few other persons he expected were all engaged, & so he & I dined tête-à-tête. Mr. Mann is a strong southerner. We agreed not only in that but other things—one of which is opposition to all duties on imported commodities, (or indirect taxes) or advocating perfectly free trade, & direct taxation. I knew that Mr. Buchanan (like other Pennsylvania Democrats,) advocated high protective duties on coal & iron, the great products of Pa. But I did not know, until now (from Mr. M.) that he had voted for the high tariff enacted in 1842. In this act of support of the protection system, & also of the basest breach of faith to the South in thus violating the noted compromise act. Mr. Rives shared the infamy. It is understood here that the hungry office-seekers who were most active in supporting Mr. Buchanan, expect him to make room for them by dismissing the present office holders, though they also are of the same party, & as good Buchanan men—& no matter if they have discharged their official duties ever so well. It is thought that this will be done. If so, it will present a new phase of the proscription system, which was first established by President Jackson, & adopted by every succeeding administration. This course has been, when a party victory was gained in a presidential election, for the new incumbent to turn out every office-holder, of the opposite party, no matter how meritorious, & to give their place to his supporters. This was sufficiently infamous. But when no change of party power is made, as at present, the partisans who have done all the dirty work of the election, will lose their pay, if respect is paid to the occupancy or merit of office-holders. Therefore, as reported, there is to be a general sweep. And in rewarding his expectant friends, the president will convert as many other friends to enemies, by unjustly depriving them of office. Truly Mr B. will have an uneasy time.

23<sup>rd</sup>.

I left the wharf at Washington at 6½ A. m. & by steamer & railway reached Richmond at 2½ P. M.